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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1483
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 9149
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 6544
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0506
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 7716
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 4762
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN 0561
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 5096
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 6374
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 7381
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 2139
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 1843
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 001196

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [BL](#)
SUBJECT: BOLIVIA: SPECULATION, LITTLE PROGRESS IN BOMBING
CASE; GOB REQUESTS AID FOR VICTIM CARE

REF: A. LA PAZ 1183
[1](#)B. LA PAZ 1180
[1](#)C. LA PAZ 1170

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires John Creamer, reasons 1.4 (b, d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: After initially blaming a range of potential actors for two letter bombs that exploded August 12 in La Paz (reftels A - C), the GOB now seems to be downplaying the attacks. Some embassy sources suggest the bombings could be the result of differences within President Morales' ruling Movement Toward Socialism party (MAS). The GOB has refused investigation assistance from Brazil, Argentina, Spain, and the U.S., while the Bolivian Minister of Health has requested U.S. support for medical treatment in Miami for one of the bombing victims, the wife of social group leader and Morales ally Fidel Surco. NAS has received a request to upgrade the Bolivian postal service's mail-scanning capabilities. The GOB continues to refrain -- so far -- from publicly charging or implying any USG involvement in the bombings. End summary.

Bombings Result of Intra-MAS Clash?

[1](#)2. (SBU) President Morales initially blamed a range of actors for the bombings, including the political opposition, ex-military leaders, and unnamed Peruvian mercenaries. He also referred to supposed past USG involvement in similar actions, but stopped short of accusing the USG of involvement in these attacks. Since Morales's initial statements, however, the GOB appears to have gone quiet on the issue. So far there have been no arrests or announcements of specific suspects in the case.

[1](#)3. (C) Embassy sources suggest either one or both of the bombs could have been the result of an intra-MAS clash (which would account for the GOB's lower profile on the issue). One source stated that Morales had recently elevated Surco within the MAS hierarchy, resulting in jealousy and, possibly, the attacks that badly wounded Surco's wife. (Note: With the jailing of former Morales deputy Santos Ramirez, many contacts have noted a power vacuum within the MAS, which Surco may be filling. In his position as leader of social group CONALCAM (Coordinadora Nacional por el Cambio), Surco

is one of the party's key indigenous leaders. End note.)

GOB Refuses Police Help, Asks Support for Medical Care

14. (C) The Bolivian government has refused investigation assistance offered by the governments of Brazil, Argentina, and Spain. RSO offered FBI forensic analysis assistance to Bolivian National Police Commander Escobar, which was also declined.

15. (SBU) Surco and his injured wife plan to travel to Miami for medical treatment to salvage at least one of her severely damaged eyes. The Embassy is expediting visas for the patient and attending medical staff. Bolivian Minister of Health Tapia Sainz came to the Embassy August 19 to request U.S. assistance for Surco's wife's treatment, explaining to the Charge that the GOB will guarantee payment but the expenses must be covered by private and international resources -- meaning the GOB may have to arrange a payment plan with the private U.S. hospital. The Charge indicated that we are pleased to be able to facilitate the Surcos party's travel and that we will review what possible additional assistance we can provide. We issued the visa late on August 19 after receiving a Bolivian diplomatic note guaranteeing payment.

GOB Requests Technical Assistance, Equipment

16. (C) Following the bombings, Embassy NAS officer met with a Bolivian postal service representative at the Bolivian's request to discuss how to fix the postal service's only x-ray machine, which the USG donated in 2007. He requested NAS assistance to procure more equipment (possibly used machines from the US Postal Service), train postal inspectors and possibly also to help with a national consciousness-raising campaign regarding suspicious mailings. NAS is waiting for a formal letter from the GOB requesting such assistance.

Comment

17. (C) Although discussion of an internal MAS motive behind the bombings remains speculative, we note the GOB has stopped making public accusations for now and has yet to point a finger directly at the USG. Early fears that the government would use the bombings to launch new campaigns against its perceived enemies have so far not been realized. Reluctant as ever to accept help from the U.S. and broader international community on the investigation itself, Bolivian government officials have identified some areas of cooperation and -- significantly -- have come to us for aid in getting urgent medical care for a victim of terrorism.

CREAMER